

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT AND DECISION RECORD (2006 EA for South Meadows Road Realignment)

Proposal: : On August 31, 2004, BLM signed a Decision Record and Finding of No Significant Impact for the South Meadows Road Extension environmental assessment (EA). The Decision Record selected the Proposed Action Alternative authorizing the alignment across BLM land. The EA was prepared in conjunction with the County of Santa Fe's (County) application for a right-of-way from the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to authorize legal access across BLM land for the South Meadows Road extension in Santa Fe County. The new section of South Meadows Road would extend from Agua Fria Street to the New Mexico #599 Frontage Road where it intersects Santa Fe County Road #62. The selection of the Proposed Action alternative allows the issuance of a right-of-way to the County by BLM. Approximately 454 feet of road would be constructed on BLM land.

In June of 2005, the County requested a modification to the original road alignment in lot 20 due to the fact that the proposed action alternative would cross private land east of the BLM which would require a partial taking of the private land which the County wished to avoid. The realignment on BLM would shift the road 100 feet west of the original route extending the road along the eastern boundary of lot 20 instead of on the adjacent private property. As proposed, the modified right-of-way alignment on BLM is 1,054 long by 80 feet wide for a total acreage of 1.936 acres. In order to analyze the impacts from the proposed realignment, a new 2006 EA was prepared incorporating by reference the 2004 EA.

In addition to the Proposed Action alignment and realignment analyzed in the 2004 EA and the 2006 EA, three other routes referred to as Alignments A-C were also analyzed as well as the no-action alternative. None of these alignments would cross lands administered by BLM. The results of the analysis resulted in the three alternative routes being eliminated from further consideration. The reasons for their elimination are discussed in the EA.

Finding of No Significant Impacts: A thorough analysis of environmental impacts has been conducted and based on that analysis, I have determined that impacts will not be significant. Therefore, an environmental impact statement is not required.

Public and Agency Review and Comment:

The EA, preliminary FONSI and Decision Record were made available for public and agency review from July 24, 2006 through August 7, 2006. The EA was distributed to the BLM Public rooms at the New Mexico State Office and the Taos Field Office, the BLM external webpage and to the Santa Fe Main Public Library and the Oliver La Farge Branch Public Library. No comments were received by BLM or the County of Santa Fe in response to the EA.

Decision to be Made: The BLM only has authority to make decisions regarding lands and resources managed by BLM. Therefore, the decision to be made by BLM is whether the proposed modified road alignment across BLM land as described in the new 2006 EA would best meet the needs of the County for the South Meadows Road Extension as described in the Purpose and Need section of the 2006 EA while minimizing impacts to resources on public land.

Decision: It is my decision to select the Proposed Action Alternative as described in the 2006 EA which would authorize the modified alignment of the road on BLM land.

This decision allows for a right-of-way to be issued to Santa Fe County authorizing the construction, operation and maintenance of a segment of the South Meadows Road Extension on BLM land in accordance with the specifications described in the 2006 EA for this alignment.

In addition, I am adopting the mitigation measures described throughout the 2004 and 2006 EAs and summarized in section 4, Environmental Commitments to Minimize Potential Adverse Effects.

Actions Connected to the Proposal Outside of this BLM Decision: Actions connected to this proposal but outside BLM's jurisdiction include the authorization and construction of those portions of the South Meadows Road Extension which would be located on private property. Easements or agreements authorizing construction of the South Meadows Road Extension across private lands would be negotiated between Santa Fe County and the respective land owners and would not involve BLM.

Any development on private lands along the Proposed Action alignment that resulted from the construction of the South Meadows Road Extension is guided and controlled by the Santa Fe Land Development Code which determines, based on zoning and other factors, the type and level of development that is allowed. The potential for development of private properties for residential and business use is also subject to water availability and decisions on these matters rest with the New Mexico Office of the State Engineer and the County of Santa Fe

Rationale for the Decision: My decision to authorize the right-of-way is based on the following rationale:

- The activities within the selected alternative are in conformance with the Taos Resource Management Plan (1988) and BLM policy and guidance.
- The major resource issues identified through BLM interdisciplinary review have been addressed in the analysis and considered in the decision. Based on the analysis in the EA, the impacts of the activities to be authorized are not expected to be significant.
- There are no adverse impacts to Federally listed threatened or endangered plant or animal species or to cultural resources.
- Impacts to resources on BLM land from the implementation of the Proposed Action will be mitigated by stipulations issued with the right-of-way grant. The stipulations will require the implementation of Best Management Practices as well as other measures in the construction of roads and placement of utilities to minimize impacts to resources.


Taos Field Office Manager

8/10/2006
Date